



The importance of identifying solutions for populations in situations of vulnerability related to COVID-19 and Public health measures

Dra. Gerry Eijkemans
Unit Chief
Health Promotion and Social Determinants
of Health

Dr. Orielle Solar
Advisor Social Determinants

Dr Fernanda Lanzagorta
Consultant

COVID-19 in the Americas



- Socio-economic context
- Huge inequalities and inequities
- 80% of population lives in cities
- Informal economy over 50%
- Exclusion
- Violence



COVID-19 has magnified
and intensified the inequalities

Implementation of public health measures



- Save lives, Flatten the curve, Protect Healthcare workers, Prevent over-saturation of the Health system
- Stay at home orders/quarantines/school and business closures/cancellation of mass gatherings, transportation
- Handwashing, masks (more recently)

Groups in situation of vulnerability-considerations



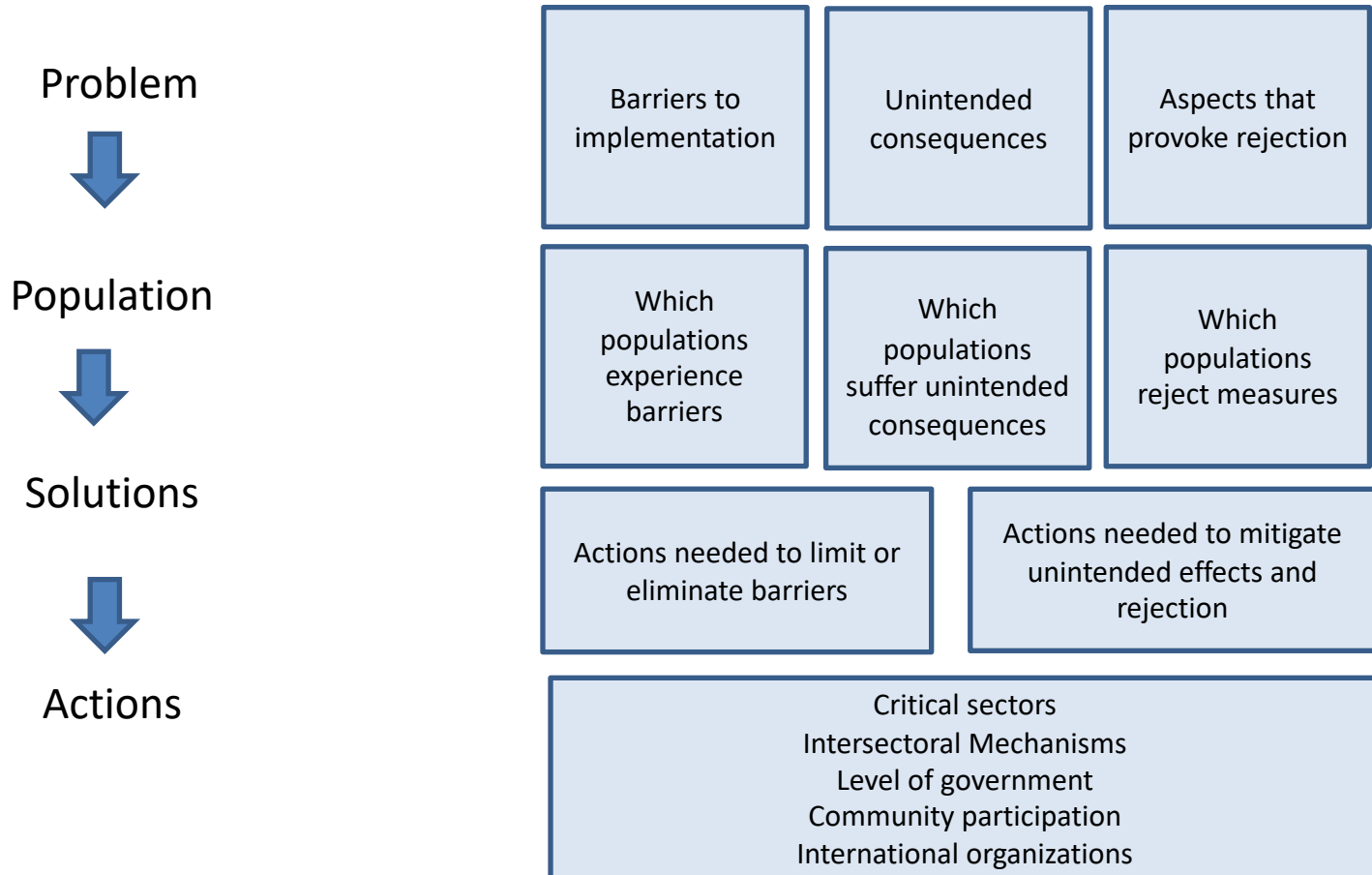
The approach to **vulnerability** often is mainly related to *biological* and *individual* attributes and focuses on risk factors and mortality.

E.g. : Elderly, women, children, indigenous populations, those with NCDs , obesity

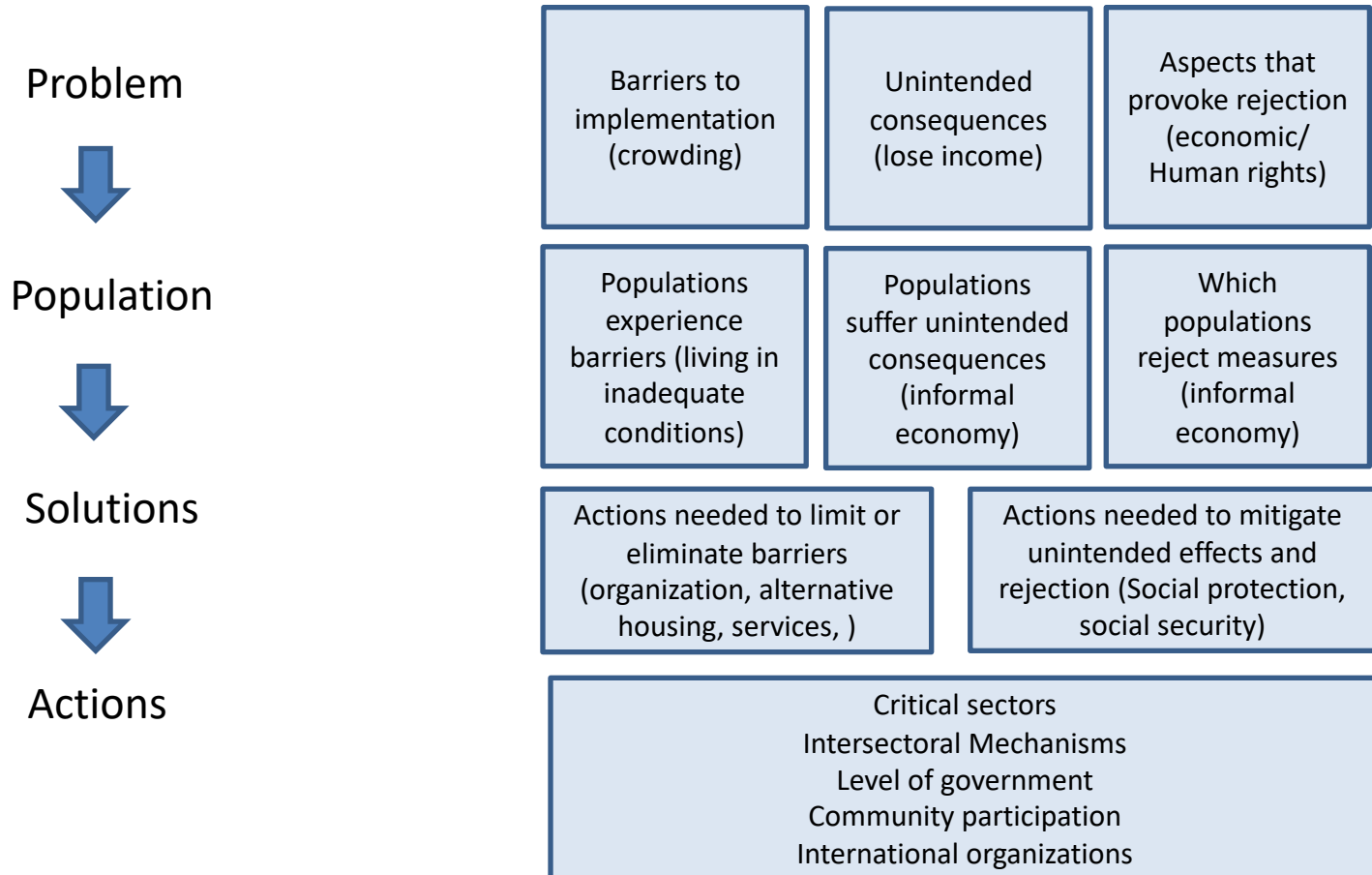
We need to adjust and broaden the perspective of population in vulnerable conditions to make it relevant for the response to the pandemic and it needs to be helpful in responding:

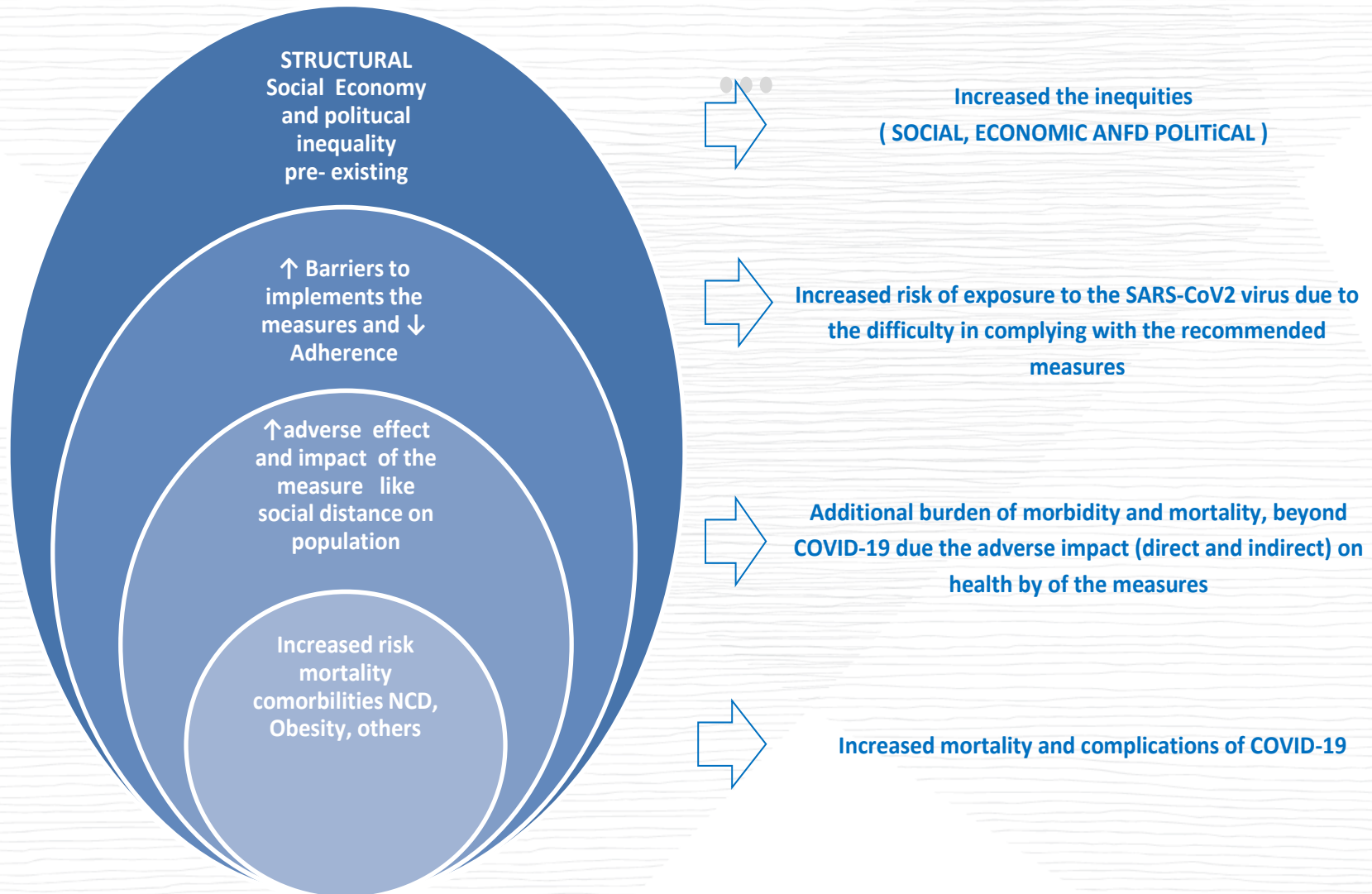
- Why was the implementation of the non-pharmacological measures not effective ?
- How was the social-economic-cultural- political context considered in the formulation, implementation and adaptation of the measures and the mitigation of negative consequences of the application of the measures
- How was the heterogeneity of needs of social groups considered in the implementation of measures?

Analysis based on Measures taken by countries as recommended by PAHO/WHO



Example- home confinement





Populations in situation of vulnerability

Different categories of workers (informal economy, self-employed, those with precarious contracts, without social security or social protection, essential workers)

People living in inadequate housing or in crowded spaces, in different kind of institutions (long term care, deprived of liberty etc.)

Organization of households (single parent/woman head of household, people living alone, those who depend on care of others)

Migrants, people living with disability, indigenous populations, afro-descendent populations, homeless

Territories: Informal urban settlements and Remote rural areas

Key messages



- 1. Populations have faced barriers to and consequences from the Implementation of public health measures**
- 2. Not everyone has the same opportunities to implement the measures, and not everyone suffers from the non-intended consequences in the same way and intensity**
- 3. Local socio-economic and cultural context needs to be taken into account when implementing measures**
 - 1. Measures need to be adapted to context**
 - 2. It is essential to implement complementary policies, strategies, actions that reduce the barriers to implementation, and to mitigate the negative effects of the implementation, e.g. social security, social protection, support services, food, etc.**
- 4. Community participation is essential**
- 5. Role of local governments is key, and a coordination between local and national governments is crucial**

Window of opportunity: COVID-19 as opportunity



- Visibility of previous inequalities is high
(PROBLEM)
- All sectors are concerned and interested
(POLITICS)
- To improve health, a SDH and equity approach is needed “ *health care is not sufficient to address the pandemic*”
(CHANGE)
- **A new normal can and should mean a better normal,**

For everyone





Thank you